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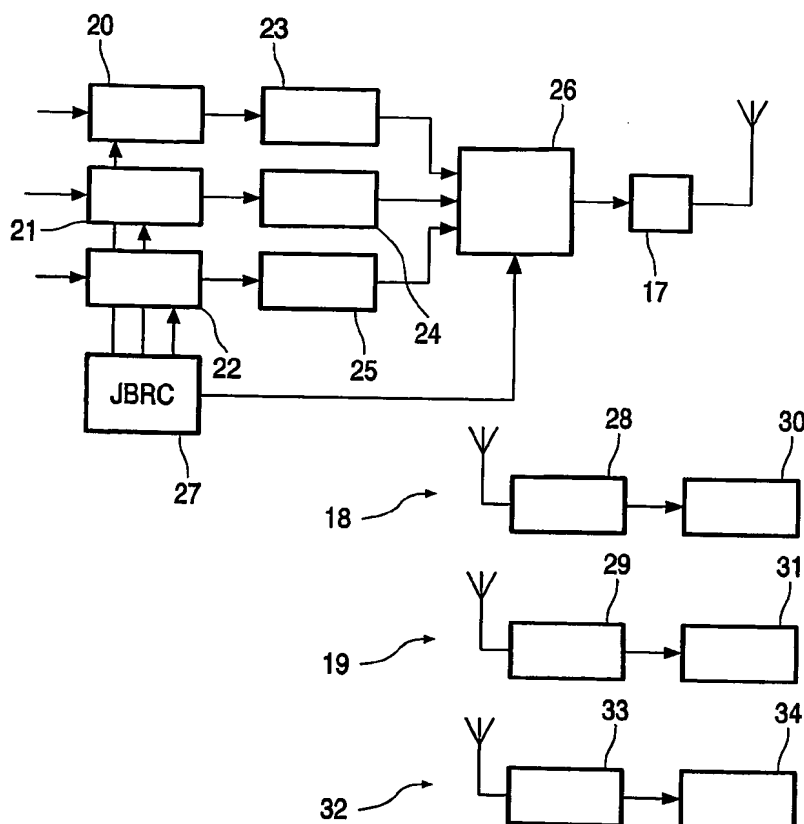
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(54) Title: JOINT BIT RATE CONTROL



(57) Abstract: A gateway 15 of an in-home audio visual distribution system comprises first to third encoder or transcoders 20-22, each being associated with a respective buffer 23-25. Each encoder or transcoder and buffer combination process signals from a different input channel. Data signals from the buffers are scheduled by an earliest deadline first scheduler 26 for transmission over a wireless link via a transmitter 17. A joint bit rate controller 27 is arranged to control the encoders or transcoders to adopt a bit rate which is dependent on the amount of data stored in the buffers 23-25 awaiting transmission, particularly on the difference between the amount of data and a target amount. The output bit rate of the encoders or transcoders is dependent also on the complexity of the content being coded. Following a channel change or start-up event, the scheduler 26 is controlled to transmit data for the relevant channel with priority over data for the other channels.

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